

**REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES**

July 20, 2005

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Snodgrass, Commissioners Allen, McCarthy, Parnell, Petitpas, Querry

STAFF PRESENT: Lori Peckol, Gary Lee, Redmond Planning Department

RECORDING SECRETARY: Karen Nolz

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Snodgrass in the Public Safety Building Council Chambers. All Commissioners were present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by acclamation.

ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE – None

PUBLIC HEARING

Unit Lot Subdivision Provisions and Update to Administrative Design Flexibility Regulations for Downtown, L040139

Chair Snodgrass opened the public hearing.

Mr. Lee presented a brief overview of the proposed amendment RCDG Section 20D.180.10-060, Exceptions to Lot Standards; and 20C.40.40-030 Administrative Design Flexibility (ADF). He explained that the amendment was initiated by Robert Pantley, and a copy of the application was Exhibit B in the packet. He continued that staff has analyzed the proposal and come up with a recommendation similar to what is presented in Exhibit B. The Unit Lot Subdivision Provisions would be effective citywide, but the Administrative Design Flexibility Regulations for Downtown would only effect downtown. He inquired if anyone had any comments on the matrix of discussion issues. There were none.

The applicant Robert Pantley explained that the proposed amendment is a collaboration between the applicant and staff. He thought staff took his ideas, and made them better. Since Redmond is becoming more urban, there is the opportunity to do a different kind of housing. Now, in Redmond, a townhome cannot be platted. This amendment would allow townhome residents to have a garden. He said that he has had very good experiences with the Design Review Board and the Technical Committee, and thinks there are a lot of safeguards in Redmond. For the City to allow more types of creative uses would be excellent. Mr. Pantley said that he had just returned from a sustainable development tour in Europe where the residents are able to create rooftop gardens that are a different kind of open space. He supported the need for flexibility in the design guidelines, so that developers can be innovative and creative when new concepts make sense.

Chair Snodgrass closed the public hearing.

STUDY SESSION

Referring to the issues list, Chair Snodgrass said that he had prepared a couple of proposed amendments pertaining to #6. He added these to the discussion.

Issue #1 – What are the expected implications of the proposed amendment for the City’s 2022 housing target and housing capacity, particularly for the Downtown and for Overlake?

Commissioner Querry wanted to discuss the dwelling units per acre, and noted that there is a second issue that makes a recommendation around minimum dwelling units per acre.

Chair Snodgrass said that being able to have a garden, a safe backyard for children to play, and privacy are important to the quality of life of residents, particularly in downtown.

Commissioner Petitpas said she does worry that they are not getting quite as much density as they would like. But she thought the amendment addressed her current issues, and is going in the right direction.

There was agreement with the staff recommendation, and Issue 1 was considered closed.

Issue #2 – What is the appropriate scope of the proposed amendment? Should it apply Citywide as proposed? Should it apply in East Hill as a starting point?

Commissioner Allen commented that her proposal regarding starting in East Hill would mean that Mr. Pantley could not build his wonderful Redmond Court, so she withdrew the proposal.

Commissioner Petitpas said that she wants to make sure this would not be addressing only that one project, but that it is citywide.

The language on page 3 marked as (e) that staff wants to add to reserve areas of downtown slated for greater density and to have a higher minimum density seemed a good idea to Commissioner Allen.

Mr. Lee explained that staff does not think the two downtown sub-districts, Sammamish Trail and Town Square should have a product like the duplex-type townhouse products shown in exhibits, so staff is proposing the minimum residential density required for Unit Lot Subdivisions in those two sub-districts of Downtown. Staff is fine with having that product in the East Hill district.

Ms. Peckol added that staff does not recommend establishing minimum residential density for Overlake Center at this time, and would be happy just to get more housing, in general. There is not a vision for certain sections of that overall center similar to what there is for downtown because that area has not been taken to that level of planning. The existing vision for Overlake is for the whole rather than sub-districts within it as downtown has. But minimum density is a good thing to think about eventually for Overlake Center.

Commissioner Parnell questioned the three-year sunset clause being an effective instrument. He wondered if the City has a lot of sunset clauses, and how often they occur. He questioned if they would be driving their future schedule by going with a sunset clause for the Unit Lot Subdivision amendments. Also, the last five years have seemed somewhat slow for development, so a three-year window seems small. The economy is just now picking up again. The proposed condos along the railroad tracks are starting to take reservations now. He questioned if three years is an effective time window, or would five years be an acceptable alternative to that. He thought he might be willing to support this depending on the answer.

If the market gets really hot, Mr. Lee said that three years might be an adequate window. There is not that much land left to develop in downtown.

Commissioner Parnell asked if this could not be revisited if there is a noticeable trend. He commented that he likes innovative housing.

Mr. Lee responded that whenever there are areas like that where someone has a concern about zoning there is the option of a moratorium. Redmond has not often had a moratorium.

Chair Snodgrass asked if there was support for discussing a sunset clause.

Commissioner Allen thought a sunset clause to be a good idea given the concerns about density. This type of housing might dilute the density goal, so it would be good to review the issue.

Commissioner Petitpas agreed that this is a focused-enough product that if reviewed again in three years would not take a lot of time. There would also be some history to watch to see what has happened. There is such a lack of available land. She would like to look at this issue in a few years.

Commissioner Query thought there to be no harm in doing that. She said she knows the makeup of Commission and Council will be different then, and thinks having different eyes look at this after it has been in place for awhile is a good idea.

Commissioner McCarthy agreed that this is a good idea, and three years is the right interval.

Chair Snodgrass reiterated the other suggestions—establishing minimum density or design criteria, and asked if there was agreement that is fairly well handled by subparagraph (e).

Mr. Lee thought subparagraph (e) would address Item 3, and added that Item 4 is a recommendation for that.

There was agreement with the staff recommendation.

When Commissioner Query requested to see the Sammamish Trail and Town Square districts on a map, Mr. Lee showed her a district map on the overhead.

Issue #3 – Should there be a minimum site size required for Administrative Design Flexibility?

Chair Snodgrass explained that the Downtown is where the City would like to see development of higher density developments and a transit center so there is less concern with minimum site size requirements and the proposed amendment. With regard to other locations in the City, such as residential neighborhoods, he expressed concern that a proposed development under the Unit Lot Subdivision provisions would only be reviewed by the Technical Committee, and that there would not be sufficient guidance and review related to design standards, siting compatibility with the neighborhood, and similar concerns.

Chair Snodgrass pointed out that Site Plan Entitlement requires design review except in the case of single-family dwellings, so one could receive approval for a single-family development without Design Review Board review. He thinks a review would be important in a situation like this, so he would propose that if an applicant is seeking exceptions on lot standards on any of these applications that they be referred to the Design Review Board for review, using the general criteria of compatibility with the neighborhood and overall City design standards. He agreed with Mr. Pantley that Redmond has an excellent Design Review Board, made up of individuals who are experienced in design and who have a vision for the City. He noted that the portion of the Development Guide that relates to the Design Review Board's authority

would have to be amended to add the authority to review this sort of application. His question is whether to do this as part of the Site Plan Entitlement process or wait until the permit process. He thought the logical thing would be to do it in the Site Plan Entitlement.

Mr. Lee responded that the first paragraph of Exhibit A provides that the Unit Lot Subdivision provisions apply only if the proposed development is granted approval through Site Plan Entitlement, Planned Residential Development, or Planned Commercial Development. He clarified that Site Plan Entitlement is for downtown applications. Planned Residential Development provisions do not apply in the Downtown. For the Downtown, the only way for an applicant to seek flexibility is through the Administrative Design Flexibility (ADF) provisions.

Referring to the second paragraph 6 (a), Commissioner Petitpas noted that Mr. Lee mentioned a fourth review method – Innovative Housing Demonstration Project. She suggested that this method also be included in the first paragraph in paragraph 6.

Continuing, Mr. Lee explained that the intent is that an applicant would seek any deviations from development standards by first completing the Planned Residential Development process (for residential neighborhoods) or the Administrative Design Flexibility in the Downtown Neighborhood through the Site Plan Entitlement process. Flexibility in design standards is not provided through the Unit Lot Subdivision process. To eliminate confusion, he thought that Paragraph b on Page 1 could be deleted from the Unit Lot Subdivision because that standard is included in the Downtown ADF as Item (c). He explained the hierarchy of how these amendments work. The Unit Lot Subdivision provision is like a subdivision map that is laid on top of a site plan that has already been approved. Then, with the Unit Lot Subdivision, all the property lines of the unit lot do not affect the setbacks. It is the property lines of the parent lot. The proposed ADF amendment to allow deviations in the street standard for the Downtown is needed because currently, the City has no process that applies to the Downtown through which to consider such deviations. In the residential zones, it is the PRD that allows variations in lot standards and lot configuration and street standards provided that the density is not increased. There is no section in the PRD process for the Downtown.

Chair Snodgrass clarified that his concern was that the Unit Lot Subdivision provisions could be used instead of the PRD process, and that the protections of Design Review Board and Technical Committee review would not apply. .

Saying that he understood the question, Mr. Lee had already asked some staff members about their understanding of the PRD versus the Unit Lot Subdivision, and they echoed his understanding that in the residential zones, to deviate from the normal subdivision standard, a PRD is required first. That is why it says the Unit Lot Subdivision is applied to plans that are already approved through a Planned Residential Development or Site Plan Entitlement process. Unit Lot Subdivision is something that would be applied to a site plan that has been approved already. He confirmed for Commissioner Allen that there is no minimum size for a residential PRD.

Commissioner Allen said that she is concerned about someone trying to go around the regulation to get design flexibility, and asked if it is possible to just apply for a Site Plan Entitlement. Mr. Lee responded that this is possible, but would be a waste of money because it is not like a variance and does not give any flexibility.

Mr. Lee clarified for Chair Snodgrass that townhome residences are attached, and would not be exempt from the Site Plan Entitlement. Mr. Lee confirmed that every project of this sort has to go through Site Plan Entitlement or the PRD process, whichever one applies. However, there is one possible refinement of the proposed amendment that might further address the concern. In Exhibit A, Paragraph A, Page 1, he proposed changing the second sentence to: "The development as a whole shall conform to the regulations

of the zone the site is in and to plans granted approval.” Chair Snodgrass had thought that Design Review Board review would be discretionary with the Technical Committee under Site Plan Entitlement. But Design Review Board review is mandatory under the PRD for attached dwelling units.

Chair Snodgrass emphasized that he wants for single-family residential the requirement for Design Review Board review.

Ms. Peckol read page 200 in the Design Review Board section that two-unit residential buildings would go to the Design Review Board review.

Mr. Lee said his understanding is that basically, all developments except a single-family detached dwelling have to go to the Design Review Board.

Chair Snodgrass withdrew his proposed amendments commenting that his concerns addressed. His initial concern was that people would use these provisions for scattered development of fourplex units. Staff agreed this is unlikely to occur.

There was agreement with the staff recommendation, and Issue #3 was closed.

Back to Issue #2

Commissioner Querry requested a straw poll on the rewording of 20D.180.10-060(6)(e), concerning establishing a minimum residential density in the Sammamish Trail and Town Square districts of downtown

Commissioner Parnell said he recently reviewed the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element. There are five different policies that speak to affordable housing. But also there is a policy that requires if density is reduced in one area by a rezone, then there must be compensation by allowing more density elsewhere. He agreed with adding (e).

Commissioner Allen commented that she does not see the proposal as a request for rezone. The developers can still build up to the maximum zone that was there previously. This might affect their incentive to do so.

Chair Snodgrass clarified that they are not changing the zoning or reducing the capacity.

Commissioner Parnell thought that the net effect of this change would be to promote affordable housing.

Commissioner Petitpas rationalized that these might not be tiny apartments, but they could certainly be more affordable than large houses. This is a really key option for housing in capacity as well as price. She thought it a good idea to put in at least a couple of areas where higher density should be maintained.

There was agreement with the proposed wording of (e) under Issue #2.

Issue #4 – Should permeable surfaces be required as part of the proposed amendment?

Commissioner Parnell said he would not be in support of permeable surfaces being required anywhere near a wellhead. He expressed support for the staff recommendation.

There was agreement with the staff recommendation, and Issue #4 was closed.

Issue #5 – Effective Date of Proposal for Perrigo Plat

Commissioner Allen explained that she had been looking at the Downtown policies specifically for the Perrigo Plat, and one of the policies, DT 68, required maintaining views from the street or open space between buildings by avoiding a continuous building face along the block. Her concern is that a development like Redmond Court could, under the current rules, be built as a condominium or apartment in Perrigo Plat, although this has not happened because of the insurance-for-condominiums issue. The policy changing these regulations has not been implemented yet. Her concern is that this proposal could result in a rush to the Permit Center to vest prior to the regulations that are pending in a few months. Possibly by opening this up by allowing Unit Lot Subdivision, developers might create something bigger and more massive in Perrigo Plat than what has been imagined. Her question to staff yesterday was about what would be the effect of delaying the effective date of the Unit Lot Subdivision ordinance to coordinate with the passage of regulations for downtown. She said she was satisfied with staff's response on this issue.

Mr. Pantley reiterated his suggestion to establish different dates in different areas and to delay the date for the Perrigo Plat area. This seems to him to be a reasonable approach.

There was agreement to delay the effective date of the Unit Lot Subdivision ordinance in Perrigo Plat to coordinate with the passage of regulations for downtown.

Addition #6 – Addition below to 20D.180.10-060 – Exceptions to Lot Standards

Chair Snodgrass proposed that “lain” be changed to “laid” on the Issues table in Issue 6.

On Exhibit A, Page 1 of 3, subparagraph (d), last sentence: Change “as recorded with the Director of the King County Department of Records and Elections” to “and shall be recorded with the Director of the King County Department of Records and Elections.” Provisions (e) and (f) are correct as is.

Commissioner McCarthy asked why this alternative did not fall under Innovative Housing. Mr. Lee responded that Innovative Housing was too far along for this to be included.

Commissioner Petitpas explained that this is already allowed to be built; it is just the lot-size minimum and the fee-simple issue that this addresses, and the Innovative Housing does not.

Regarding the parking standards, Mr. Pantley explained that for Redmond Court the Design Review Board and he wanted to put a landscape area in the middle of the motor courtyard; but coming out of the garage, drivers had to have a certain distance that could not be changed or modified. This was very frustrating

Chair Snodgrass and Commissioner Query both commented that parking should be deemphasized and some flexibility given to parking around residential developments.

It was moved by Commissioner Parnell and seconded by Commissioner Query to recommend adoption of these amendments with the agreed upon changes, as follows:

- **Include the staff proposal for a three-year sunset clause and the addition of subparagraph (e), regarding minimum residential density, although it may have to be relettered.**
- **The addition of language in (a) regarding compliance with the regulations of the zone.**
- **The Perrigo Plat effective date change**
- **Those minor editorial changes that were made.**

Commissioner Parnell wanted to emphasize that this is one of the best things the Planning Commission has approved in recent history. It allows for more market-based infill development. Diversity of housing is really stressed in Redmond as being necessary and important to our future. He said he does not think that considerations of lot coverage should preclude anybody from not voting to approve these particular amendments.

Commissioner Allen seconded what Commissioner Parnell said and congratulated Mr. Pantley for bringing forward such an innovative ordinance. The City has challenged the development community to bring in some products that are of smaller scale. There were so many developers who came to them and said they could only build six stories for this to pencil out. Yet here there is something that is human scale and also penciling out for developers.

Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

August 10 Approval of the Planning Commission Report on Unit Lot Subdivision Provisions and Update to Administrative Design Flexibility Regulations for Downtown.

Commissioners McCarthy and Petitpas will be excused.

August 17 Sign Code Amendment

Commissioner Petitpas will be excused.

Commissioner McCarthy should meet with Mr. Lee in the next week regarding the upcoming downtown regulations.

REPORTS

Ms. Peckol reported that there were no additional items referred to the Planning Commission by the Council at the July 19 Council meeting. The content of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan Amendment package is scheduled for approval on August 16. Council approved the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan. Innovative Housing is scheduled for approval on August 16.

APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY

The proposed approval of the July 13, 2005 Meeting Summary was postponed to the next meeting.

ADJOURN

Chair Snodgrass adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m.

Minutes Approved On:

Recording Secretary:
